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LONDON SUNDAY TELEGRAPH  
September 13, 1964**GREVILLE WYNNE'S STORY—Part II**

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**O**LEG PENKOVSKY looked terrible when I saw him through the spy-hole of his cell in the Lubyanka prison in Moscow. But I could not fail to recognise him.

He was almost the same age as me. His birthday was on March 28, 1919, my birthday was on the 19th. We were almost the same height, the same build, the same age. He was a very alive person, extremely intelligent on a variety of subjects. He had a sense of humour. He liked vodka, he liked wine, he liked spirits, but he would hardly drink at all in business hours. I never saw him drunk. He was always very much alert.

He had a military bearing and was probably an inch taller than me, about 5ft. 9in. He walked very quickly, was very keen on his health, and took a lot of exercise. He was always asking how he looked, and he was very upset because he was slightly bald—he used to try all sorts of tonics which he couldn't get in Russia. He liked the company of women.

Penkovsky told me that he had been brought up under the Communist system, had become an active Communist party member, was recruited into the Red Army, and served as an artillery officer in the Japanese-Manchurian, Finnish and German wars. He had become a colonel at the age of 30. His father had fought as an officer in the White Army during the Revolution.

Penkovsky had married a general's daughter, and after his military career he became a full-time member of the State Security organisation and an intelligence officer of the reserve Army. The Russians went to great lengths to deny this to me, and told me that if I mentioned this in court or at any other time later, they would make much trouble for me. Penkovsky had shown me and other people in the West official cards and documents identifying him as a member of military intelligence. That is why he joined the Technical-Scientific Committee. It was purely a method of meeting Western delegations, keeping tabs on them, and picking Western brains.

He told me his eyes were opened when he went to Istanbul as assistant military attaché in 1947. It was the first time he had been out of Russia. After the war a lot of Russians like him, particularly in

# "Oh, My Poor Russians!"

## Said Penkovsky

CPYRGHT

How a Communist's eyes were opened to Western ways, how he debated "Shall I stay?" and how his English friend found himself under Russian suspicion.

By **GREVILLE WYNNE**

CPYRGHT

the Army, did not necessarily want capitalism in an American sense—what they wanted was a more liberal form of socialism, and a more reasonable attitude.

He was a member of the Communist party. He said he did not want to give the impression that he was turning against the Russian people, against his country. But a lot of his friends, some of them in very high places, were feeling the same way. After Stalin they expected changes to take place much more quickly, but the economy of the country was being drained for soldiers and guns and military equipment.

There was not the slightest doubt in my mind that Penkovsky was genuine, and I am prepared from what I know about other things to believe that people in high places badly want a more liberal and sensible way of life. In a way, he was the top of an iceberg; there are lots like him below the surface.

When I left Moscow in December, 1960, with that first delegation, it had been agreed in principle that a Russian delegation would pay a return visit to England and visit my companies and factories. There was delay, so I agreed with my companies to go to Moscow again to try to finalise the programme. Penkovsky was there to meet me.

"Now Mr. Wynne," he said, "you have come because there is some delay in the delegation. Well we have a delegation, I have a delegation, and I am coming to England."

I asked who the delegation members were, and he gave me a list. "Professor —, who is he?" I asked.

"Ah, the Professor. He is in Moscow now. He looks after radar, and he is interested of course in Jodrell Bank."

"Well Mr. Penkovsky, I am not selling Jodrell Bank. And who is this —?"

LONDON SUNDAY TELEGRAPH

CPYRGHT

September 13, 1964



**IN LONDON** Penkovsky  
was a keen party-goer

"He also is in Moscow at the moment. He is interested in computers."

"But I am not representing any companies with computers." To cut a long story short, there was only one man of the eight he had got who represented a firm that I had anything to do with.

I told him, "I can't accept this delegation as they do not represent the interests and equipment of the companies I represent. You are expected to come to look at the equipment which I am selling."

Then Penkovsky said, "Please Mr. Wynne, I beg you, I cannot explain, but I must come to England. If you make trouble for me I cannot come. Maybe they will send another delegation if you make trouble, but then I will not come."

"I would like you to come," I said, "but what difference does it make? This is business."

And then he told me for the first time a little of his hopes and fears for his country, and of the plans for the future that he and his friends had dreamed of. So I agreed to Penkovsky's list, and I had to tell my companies that this delegation was not really what they expected. That it was an investigating delegation of specialists coming just to look at the factories, and to report back.

Of course I knew what Penkovsky



**IN MOSCOW** with Wynne (left)  
he met British businessmen

really wanted to do in England: I accepted his useless delegation with my eyes open, just so as to enable him to come quickly to the West and make contact with British and American Intelligence.

I had one advantage besides; I had by then had several years of experience of East European countries and their people and their way of life, and I had some notion of the anguish that many of them were suffering, because I had seen it at first hand. So I was caught up with Penkovsky simply because I was there. I happened to be the right person in the right place at the right time. And I believe that most British businessmen with my experience would have done the same.

CPYRGHT

CPYRGHT

## LONDON SUNDAY TELEGRAPH

September 13, 1964

Before Lonsdale

It is worth adding, I think, in view of some of the more irresponsible comments made later, without any basis of fact, that all this happened before the Portland spy case, and before any of the British public had heard of a fellow called Lonsdale. The first Western contact with Penkovsky was made early in 1960; I myself began conversations with Penkovsky in December 1960; the Portland trial was not until March, 1961. The suggestion that my agency was engineered by Soviet intelligence purely to secure an exchange for the release of Lonsdale is entirely without foundation.

I met Penkovsky and his delegation at London Airport and shortly afterwards I took Penkovsky himself to my office. On the way I had to stop at Harrods to pick up a parcel, and took Penkovsky in with me.

As we went through the entrance he just stood there and gaped. Behind him buses and taxis unloaded customers. People pushed and jostled him aside. And he gaped at the dresses and goods in the store, and the people choosing and buying, the fitted carpets, the lighting, the general atmosphere. All he could repeat, again and again, was "Oh my people, my poor Russian people."

Russian delegates to Britain, whatever their status, are allowed only £2 5s. a day for their hotel expenses (including all meals) and 10s. a day pocket money. On the whole they can afford nothing better than boarding houses or cheap hotels in London, and they cannot afford to take taxis, go to theatres, or even go shopping to any extent. This is precisely the result that the Russian authorities hope for.

I was determined to give Penkovsky's delegation something better than this, and so I arranged that they should have reasonable accommodation at the Mount Royal Hotel near Marble Arch, and my companies would pay the difference. I explained that for meals in the hotel all they had to do was sign the bill.

The delegation arrived on a Saturday. On the Monday morning, when I arrived to take them to the North, the hotel manager took me aside; the delegates had been refusing breakfast. I found them all in one room huddled round a suitcase filled with tinned food, eating sardines out of a tin. Signing the bill is almost unknown in Russia and they had feared extra expense. When I gently explained that all meals were paid for, they ate everything in sight.

We set off for the North by car, and our first stop was Sheffield. None of the delegates had ever been to the West before, and none but Penkovsky had seen an English shop. On the outskirts of Sheffield we passed a Woolworth's, and I ordered the cars to stop. The Russians could not contain themselves; they ran from one counter to another—literally ran—picking up cheap trinkets, toothbrushes, combs, plastic pens, pencil sharpeners, rulers, photograph frames—anything and everything, as long as their money lasted.

The delegation's tour was a great success. My companies laid on luncheons, speech-making, flags flying, the Red flag and the British flag, the white tablecloths, the factories, and presents all round. And all this for nothing really, all to get Penkovsky into Britain.

Time Off

He had more energy than most; he wanted to do everything, and investigate everything. He wanted to visit museums, art galleries, cinemas and theatres, and he wanted to see the interesting buildings and go into department stores. He was not particularly interested in the factories, he wanted to get that over and done with and have his serious discussions with "important" people.

But he would keep his amusements until the evenings. Then he liked dancing, and he enjoyed bars and nightclubs.

Later, when we were in Paris, we went to cabarets at the Lido and Moulin Rouge. It was the first time he had ever seen such spectacular shows, with the chorus girls in line: they don't have that in Moscow. "Why can't the Russians have this too?" he said. "It is a very live and happy art, and not so serious as the ballet."

In England, of course, he had to be extremely careful; after all he was the leader of the delegation. But in the hotels I had arranged for delegates to have double rooms, and Penkovsky a single room. This allowed him to come and go as he pleased.

Most of his social activities in London took place on his second visit, when he

CPYRGHT

LONDON SUNDAY TELEGRAPH

September 13, 1964

CPYRGHT



**IN THE DOCK his grip  
revealed his tenseness**

came alone to assist at the Soviet exhibition in July, 1961.

I went on holiday in Switzerland in August, and then on to Moscow for the French exhibition being held there. I stayed only four days, but saw Penkovsky, who warned me that there was a possibility of his going to Paris in September for the Russian exhibition. I suggested that I should meet him at Le Bourget Airport. In the event Penkovsky did not arrive until towards the end of the second week. I had had to go to Le Bourget some 16 times—and had to make myself inconspicuous each time I went. It was a nerve-racking wait.

I had jotted down the timetable of the aircraft arrivals in a small engagement diary I kept on me. During a short visit to Belgrade a few days after Penkovsky arrived in Paris I missed this diary. It was produced again 18 months later—during interrogation at Lubyanka.

In Paris Penkovsky used to attend the Embassy or the exhibition during the day and go to some official dinners at the Embassy; but whenever he got away I was always waiting for him in a car at a pre-arranged rendezvous, and in Paris you can easily lose yourself. So we had quite a lot of amusement there, doing the usual tourist things, and he seemed to enjoy it very much. But he said he preferred England.

In Paris he asked me several times whether I thought he should stay in the West. Within four months he had visited the West three times. He had seen for himself the ordinary people in England and France, the number of cars on the streets, the rows of individual houses with their own gardens, how the department stores were crammed with goods. He was overwhelmed by it and filled with regret for the plight of his own people.

He would say, "Shall I stay? Shall I stay?" I would always answer, "I shall not influence you; it's entirely up to you."

I took him to the airport for his departure for Moscow. On the way heavy fog descended; few other people got through to Orly, there was no flying, and we sat together for four hours in the almost deserted airport. All the time he was asking, "Shall I stay?"

Eventually the fog lifted, and I said good-bye to him at the barrier. He began to go through, then came back again and said, "I will stay." I said, "Well, Alex. It is entirely up to you." I knew that he could stay if he wanted to. But he decided to go back. "I can help better if I go back," he said. "I have much work to do." He was not happy going back, but he was brave.

## Back to Help

I heard in the summer of 1962 that Penkovsky was feeling very unhappy. Apparently he was looking ill, and his morale seemed to be low. As I had become his close friend, I thought that it would be a good thing if I went over to Moscow to cheer him up and to see if I could do anything to help.

I had no real reason for going, so I had to make one up. With considerable publicity it was announced that I wished to take two huge exhibition vehicles across the Soviet Union. I wrote to the Scientific Committee and the other organisations, I sent them pictures and in July I arrived once again in Moscow on the pretext of discussing this programme with the authorities.

Penkovsky met me again at the airport. I had not seen him for nearly a year, and I was shocked by the change. He was very white and not his normal self, and he was very worried. He said that he had been working hard, and he was in a nervous state. He thought he was being watched; and Mrs. Chisholm, the wife of an attaché at the British Embassy whom he knew, was also being watched.

"I wish I had stayed in France," he told me. "At the next opportunity I have of going to the West, I shall stay there—there is no question about it."

A proposed visit to the World Fair at Seattle and to a planned Soviet trade fair in Cyprus had been put off. But he had been told by Western intelligence how he could, if he wished, leave the Soviet Union. Now I brought with me a letter which cheered him enormously, gave him a boost in morale and enabled him to regain confidence. The letter showed him that his friends outside Russia had not forgotten him.

On the second day of my visit, I had an official meeting with the State Scientific Committee, and on the evening of the third day Penkovsky and I met. He was very reluctant to be seen with me more than once, and pointed out that we had better not go to the theatre, and that I had better not meet his wife. He thought it best that we should just have an official meeting and then part—but that he would rendezvous with me at the restaurant of the Peking Hotel because we had never been there together before. We never went to the same restaurant twice.

I happened to get to the Peking with some few minutes to spare, and I walked up and down on the other side of the street. I saw some characters standing around, but they did not seem to pay too much attention to me for the moment. I knew, however, that it is not advisable for a foreigner to loiter too long in one position in the streets of Moscow.

Then Penkovsky came along with his brief case under his arm, and I crossed

LONDON SUNDAY TELEGRAPH

September 13, 1964

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# “You must go away quick . . .”

the road and went up to him. Instead of greeting me, however, he just put his hand to his nose, lowered his head, and went straight into the doorway of the restaurant.

I followed him into the lobby. He looked into the restaurant, walked about, and as he was passing me he said something that sounded like, “Follow me behind.” I gathered that there was something wrong, and I took the hint.

Penkovsky went out into the street and walked for a few hundred yards to where there was a gap in the buildings leading to a tenement area of wooden houses. He went in there, and as I was coming by he spoke to me: “Grev, quick!”

I went into the alleyway and he said, “You must go away now, quick. I might see you at the airport tomorrow but you are being followed. Go!” And he went out another way.

As I came out of the alley I saw two men standing there. And of course later in Lubyanka I saw photographs; they had had cameras.

## In the Room

When I got back to the Ukraine Hotel—early, of course, as I had had no dinner—I went up to my room and asked the female “gaoler” who keeps all the keys in her drawer: “Key?”

“No key—administration,” she said. I tried the door but could not open it, and the woman came after me and said, “Please, administration have key—please.”

Now downstairs—17 floors down—nobody ever has a key, and I got suspicious. Still, I went down to the administration and waited 10 or 15 minutes, and nobody knew anything about my key. So I went up again and the woman greeted me. “I find your key.”

I decided to check and see whether my room had been searched. I had brought with me a tin of Harpic disinfectant with an empty film canister concealed in a recess. I went into the bathroom—it was still there. I looked around, and it seemed that everything was in order.

But then I looked at my clothes. I fold my shirts in an odd way—I unbutton the front and turn the collars inwards to keep the dirt from them. But my shirts were folded with the collars outside—not just one, but all of them.

I knew then that the place had been searched. Later, after my arrest, I was shown a picture of the Harpic tin with newspapers I had bought on the plane and my blue mackintosh with the label turned inside out. My suits, my shoes, my soap and washing powder were all laid out on the bed—all in the picture. There was no question about them all being mine. And of course a close-up of the Harpic tin with the canister pulled out.

I decided to get out quickly. I was booked on a mid-morning flight to London, but I was down at the airport at six a.m. and took the first plane out, an early morning flight to Copenhagen.

Penkovsky arrived at the airport about

6.15 a.m., and arranged for me to go through the formalities quickly by showing his security card. He was still, it must be remembered, an important official. But he was obviously taking a great risk coming to the airport in his desire to get me out as quickly as possible. We said good-bye.

“Please tell my friends I’m very unhappy,” he said. “Please, I must come away as soon as possible. I will try and get some more material for you, but it is now very dangerous for me and I must be very careful.”

The next time I saw Penkovsky was through the spy-hole of his cell in Lubyanka prison.

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GRADUALLY during my interrogation they began to feed me with more and more information which they had gleaned from Penkovsky, or from their own sources: Penkovsky and me outside the Peking Hotel; photographs of a package; photographs of Penkovsky and me with a sweet packet; Penkovsky returning to me a suitcase of mine outside the Ukraine Hotel.

So I said, “Well of course I have given Penkovsky presents. If you look at my luggage now, it is full up with presents. I have shampoo, I have records, cigarette lighters, ball pens—I have a case-full. They are for everybody, not only for the Russians who can’t buy them but for other people.”

“So you plead guilty to giving Penkovsky packages?”

“But I didn’t say packages, I said presents.”

“Well, maybe you didn’t know what was in the packages.”

And for the moment they seemed satisfied. This was all that I agreed to, that I gave Penkovsky presents. It could be interpreted as bribery to Penkovsky, and I thought this might satisfy them.

For the next five weeks or so the interrogation centred on this. Interrogation would take place at 10 o’clock in the morning for two or three hours, and then back to the cell; and then in the afternoon for three or four hours. Very gentle, very business-like.

“Now Mr. Wynne, do not be stupid, you must tell because we know everything. You have admitted to giving Penkovsky presents, and now I want you to listen to—just this little piece.” And they would produce a tape-recorder and there would be Penkovsky’s voice, and mine. There was sufficient to tell me they had been listening to conversations. There was one in the Metropole Hotel room in Moscow, one in a restaurant in Budapest.

And they said, “We know that you have very friendly relations with Penkovsky. What is this matter you speak of? You are friends. You were friends in London and in Paris. What is this?” In the conversation I could be heard saying, “I wish you well, Alex,” and “I have a letter from them for you” and Penkovsky’s voice—“Yes, in the letter they say very good things.” They said it was against Soviet law to smuggle in a letter. It meant I was a spy.

I cannot really complain of inhuman treatment or that sort of thing at this period. They were stern, reasonably polite, food was moderate. For example they gave me milk each day, they gave me tea and occasionally an extra cup of tea at lunch time.

They did not shave my hair, and I was given my civilian clothes. “You see,” they said, “we only took your clothes away because we wanted to see that you weren’t carrying anything bad in them or anything of that sort, and we wanted to make sure that you weren’t going to injure yourself. You might be in a nervous state and try to be foolish. Of course we don’t treat prisoners badly these days, we are cultured people.”

Having been there about a month I had a beard. I said, fingering my stubble, “You talk about Russian culture. Is this Russian culture?”

“Oh, but please you can shave, but of course a prisoner cannot use a blade.”

“But I have an electric razor in my case.”

“Do, please, then Mr. Wynne.”

CPYRGHT

LONDON SUNDAY TELEGRAPH

September 13, 1964

speaking about the Press reaction to my arrest or anything like that, but she did.

It was now mid-December, rather less than six weeks after I had first arrived at Lubyanka. The interview lasted one hour. During my wife's visit no uniformed guards were to be seen in the prison, and even the officer who was in uniform at all times had changed into rather shabby civilian clothes. I can only assume that this was done to put my wife at ease. We were allowed to embrace.

The conversation we had was about Andrew, the house, our friends, and we didn't discuss much else. She asked me about the food and I said, "Well it's not quite like home. . . ." because at this period it was a reasonable prison diet, meat and fish occasionally, and at least I could eat most of it. They even gave me light-coloured bread.

She brought a case of things with her, some woollen clothes, fur-lined boots, pullovers, and she even brought a bottle of whisky, cigarettes, things like that. The Russians joked with her about the whisky, and she was asked to take this back. But I was given a carton of cigarettes and the photographs which she had left, and a letter from Andrew, and some books.

For four or five days after Sheila had gone, they more or less left me alone. But then I was brought in for interrogation again. At this interrogation there was a group of people. I recognised then that some were lieutenant-generals—there were about four or five that I had not seen before, but still "my" general was there, "my" lieutenant-colonel, and the same interpreter.

On this occasion I stood at the table for about half an hour — they did not invite me to sit. I started to feel in my pockets for a cigarette. The general shouted, "You are not here now to enjoy yourself! This is now serious. . . ."

"Now you have had time to think about things, we will start with the serious business of your spying activities. And anything that has gone on before we are regarding as complete and utter lies. But we will start from the beginning. We have plenty of time and you must stay here in real prison conditions until you decide to tell us the truth."

They said they would start with my first visit to Eastern Europe, which was to Poland in 1955. They had the date, they had the hotel at which I stayed, and they wanted me to start relating whom I had met and why I visited the country, and why I suddenly started to go to Eastern Europe. Who sent me?

I simply said that my mind would not go back as far as that, and if they knew at which hotel I was staying, they must have known the enterprises I had visited and the business I had done; that I was simply a business man, and as far as they were concerned I had nothing to tell.

They said that if that was the attitude I was going to take they would send me back to my cell and give me time to think. I was taken back to my cell, rather roughly handled, and shortly afterwards my civilian clothes were taken away and also all personal articles and cigarettes.

I had no woollen clothes, and they would not let me have those that my wife had brought. As a result I was pretty cold. I had to wrap some old towelling round my feet for socks, and under the thin cotton vest I put copies of *Pravda*, which came to my cell.

This was the only newspaper I had; they would not believe I couldn't speak Russian. They said that this was a blind, that I could not possibly have carried on my negotiations, and that British intelligence would not have sent me out there without knowledge of the Russian language.

For three weeks no one came near me. For three weeks I sat in that cell. They gave me a pencil and paper, though they took the pencil out of the cell at night, and told me to write my whole story and confession, which I did not do, of course.

I drew pictures on the paper, started redesigning my house and laying out a new kitchen on paper. (When eventually I got back home I started to carry out these designs!) They did not give me any reading matter, and even *Pravda* stopped coming to me after about a week.

When I went to the toilet I managed to get other pieces of paper to keep myself warm. I did exercises in the cell to keep warm. I had a long pair of cotton pants, thin cotton overalls, no socks and canvas boots. When I went out to walk they gave me a dirty heavy overcoat.

## View of the Sky

I had one hour's exercise a day on the roof of the Lubyanka, from which I could see nothing, only the sky. There was a tower, two armed guards who were in little boxes, and the little area of stone on the roof where I walked measured 12 feet by 12, with sheet metal walls and barbed wire on top about 14 feet high.

Occasionally I could hear other prisoners walking and chatting. Once I had a cigarette thrown over to me. If you wanted a cigarette you just knocked once on the wall, and if the fellow next door had got them and the soldiers were not looking, he would throw one over. If you were caught you got an extra punishment.

I took the risk and threw notes over.

Apart from the barber I never saw any other prisoners. Nor was I allowed access to anyone from the British Embassy, though I repeatedly asked to see somebody.

## The Best Suit

One day I was taken out of my cell into a room where my suitcases were opened. "Which is your best suit?" the guard asked. "We want to clean it, we want to look after your things." I chose one, and an hour later they brought it to me and said, "Put this on." They brought me a tie and they took my shoes away and cleaned them. The warden told me, "You are going to see some other people away from the prison."

I was taken to the main administrative block. We stopped outside a door, and an interpreter came out. He said, "Mr. Wynne, when you go into this room you will be very pleased in what you see. But if you speak badly about anything the meeting will be over. Remember that." I did not know what he meant.

He opened the door, I walked into the room, and there was my wife Sheila. And there too was the lieutenant-colonel. Sheila had also been told by them not to



CPYRGHT

LONDON SUNDAY TELEGRAPH  
September 13, 1964

## ... you are being followed "

The guard couldn't look everywhere at once, and occasionally while we were being led the guard would be distracted. I contacted about three prisoners during the six months I was there.

It was bitterly cold walking, but at least, however, it was fresh air and exercise. In my cell I spent most of the time cleaning and polishing; because it was pretty dirty. I did exercises, and I could go down the corridor to the cold tap once in the morning and once in the evening. I could shave only when I went to the bathroom every 10 or 12 days. The barber had electric clippers, with the result that you never had a clean shave. The hair they let grow; now it is clear to me that they had in mind my appearance in a possible public trial.

By now the food was pretty grim. During this three weeks they gave me a very bad diet indeed. I had one and a half lumps of sugar in the morning, four inches of black bread, about eight ounces, ghastly bread which was all moist and terribly indigestible. I had terrible gruel made from coarse grain and water, the Russian prison porridge, and weak tea, very weak indeed, once a day.

### Bad Diet

It was very nearly a starvation diet. In those three weeks I must have lost a lot of weight, and they were making me as uncomfortable as they possibly could.

I thought: to hell with them. If this is their attitude I shall adopt a bloody attitude as well. Because this was the only way I could maintain my morale.

During all this time, of course, I was not allowed communication with my wife; no letters; no books. Nothing to read, nothing to do at all except scribble on the paper I was left. At the end of three weeks I was again brought up for interrogation. And there again were the general, the colonel and the interpreter.

"Well, you've had time to think about things. Where are the notes you have written?"

I said, "I haven't written any notes" and the guard handed over all the papers that I had been fiddling about with, drawing my kitchen and several motor-cars; I had just amused myself on it. They didn't like it at all, and said if I persisted in this attitude it wasn't going to help me or anybody. Eventually they started questioning me, all over the same old things again. We did not get very far because I just said I had nothing to tell them.

Then, about two days later, they brought me up from my cell, they took me into another room. There were altogether about eight Russians, including some lieutenant-generals and an interpreter.

And sitting on a chair was Penkovsky. This was what they call the show-down—the joint interrogation.

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**NEXT ARTICLE: How They Rigged the Trial.**

LONDON SUNDAY TELEGRAPH  
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CPYRGHT

